

# Pain and Distraction According to Sensory Modalities: Current Findings and Future Directions

Bascour-Sandoval C.

Salgado-Salgado S.

Gómez-Milán E.

Fernández-Gómez J.

Michael G.A.

Gálvez-García G.

**Background:** This review discusses the findings in the literature on pain and distraction tasks according to their sensory modality. Distraction tasks have been shown to reduce (experimentally induced) acute pain and chronic pain. This can be influenced by nature and by the sensory modalities used in the distraction tasks. Yet the effect on reducing pain according to the sensory modality of the distraction task has received little attention. **Methods:** A bibliographic search was performed in different databases. The studies will be systematized according to the sensory modality in which the distraction task was applied. **Results:** The analyzed studies with auditory distractors showed a reduction of acute pain in adults. However, these are not effective at healthy children and in adults with chronic pain. Visual distractors showed promising results in acute pain in adults and children. Similarly, tactile and mixed distractors decreased acute pain in adults.

**Conclusion:** Distraction tasks by diverse sensory modalities have a positive effect on decreasing the perception of acute pain in adults. Future studies are necessary given the paucity of research on this topic, particularly with tactile distractors (there is only one study). Finally, the most rigorous methodology and the use of ecological contexts are encouraged in future research. © 2019 World

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